Prichard Mayor.

Cur. Special. tent. die Dominico vii° *die Januarii*, 1682. *Annoq; Regis Caroli secundi Angliæ, &c.* xxxiiii°.

THis Court doth desire Mr. *James* to print his Sermon lately preached at the *Guildhall*-Chappel before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of this City.

Wagstaffe.

20 x 15 (7), 32 P

Prichard Mayor.

Cur. Special. tent. die Dominico vii° *die Januarii*, 1682. *Annoq; Regis Caroli secundi Angliæ, &c.* xxxiiii°.

THis Court doth desire Mr. *James* to print his Sermon lately preached at the *Guildhall*-Chappel before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of this City.

Wagstaffe.

20 x 15 (7), 32 P

A

SERMON

Preached at

Guildhall-Chappel,

Decemb. 24. 1682.

BEFORE

The Right Honourable

THE

Lord Mayor, &c.

By JOHN JAMES, M. A.

Rector of *Latimers* in the County of *Bucks.*

LONDON:

Printed for *Richard Chiswell*, at the Rose and Crown in St. *Paul's* Church-yard. 1683.

To the Right Honourable

Sir Will. Pritchard

Knight,

LORD MAYOR of the City of LONDON.

Right Honourable,

AMong the many that justly admire your Lordships Worth, and seriously bless God for the Happiness of London, in that the management of the Affairs of so great a Body, next under our Soveraign Lord the King, is committed into the hands of a Person of such known Integrity and eminent Loyalty, the Author of this Discourse doth cheerfully and heartily profess himself to be one.

That this Discourse was acceptable to your Lordship when delivered in the Pulpit, I must needs impute to that Candour and Goodness which seems innate and connatural to your Lordships disposition, as is readily acknowledged by all that have but the least knowledge of your Lordships Wisdom and Prudence, so conspicuous in the good conduct and auspicious government of that great City: for though the Matter of it be incomparably great, yet the Manner of handling it falls infinitely short of the worth and excellency

of ſo divine a Subject, which ought to be highly eſteemed by all Chriſtians, and had in everlaſting remembrance by the Sons of Men.

For 'twas a deſigne highly becoming the Son of God, to oppoſe the Devil, that grand Enemy of all Goodneſs, and to confront the powers of Darkneſs; to deliver Men from the dominion of Sin, and to ſecure them from the Vengeance of Almighty God. Indeed, a deſigne of this nature required a Perſon of ſuch excellent and extraordinary Worth, ſuch divine Wiſdom, and infinite Power, ſuch exact Holineſs, and Almighty Goodneſs, to deſtroy the Works of the Devil, and to bring everlaſting Righteouſneſs into the World.

And if the World had not been ſtrangely infatuated when the Son of God became Man, neither the Jews *would have required a Signe, nor the* Greeks *ſought after Wiſdom, when he did ſo miraculouſly manifeſt his power to the ruine and deſtruction of the Devil, the moſt malicious and implacable Enemy of Mankind; whoſe inſulting Tyranny was far more ſevere and arbitrary over the* Jews, *than the cruelleſt oppoſition of the Roman Empire; and his Policy infinitely above the Philoſophical Wits and Reaſonings of the* Gentiles: *that if the one had not truſted too much to their humane Wiſdom, and the other longed too affectionately for a temporal deliverance, and a ſecular happineſs, they muſt needs have celebrated the Nativity of the Son of God with the moſt ſolemn Hallelujahs and Hoſanna's, have admired him as the great Power of God, and the Wiſdom of God, who was made Man, that he might become unto men Wiſdom, and Righteouſneſs, and Sanctification, and Redemption.*

But the Men of this Generation are moſt of all without excuſe, that believe him to be the Son of God, and his coming

coming into the World on purpoſe to deſtroy the Works of the Devil, and to take away the Sins of the World, and ſhall yet remain in ſlavery and ſubjection to the God of this World; and ſo do deſpite to the Holy One of God, and deny the Lord that bought them.

I hope therefore no eye will look with envy upon this Diſcourſe, wherein no Diſpute is commenced, no Controverſie promoted, but with the great Impoſtor and deceiver of Souls; againſt whom every Chriſtian ought to employ his utmoſt knowledge and skill, and exert his greateſt vigour and zeal, being by the ſolemnity of an Oath, the Sacrament of Baptiſm, engaged thereto.

And ſince this was the grand deſigne of Chriſt's coming into the World, I conceived an Argument of this nature very proper and ſeaſonable at this time, wherein we were to celebrate the Nativity of Chriſt, the Incarnation of the Son of God.

And becauſe your Lordſhip hath commanded that this Diſcourſe, whatever it be, ſhould become publick (which elſe had remained as private as the Author) as I have ever eſteemed Obedience the beſt Sacrifice, and a ready ſubmiſſion to the pleaſure of our Governours in all things lawful, a moſt excellent Duty, and extreamly becoming all Chriſtian Profeſſors; ſo in compliance with your Lordſhips Command, it is now ſent forth into the World: and I hope, under the Patronage of ſo honourable a Perſon, may be received with the like kindneſs and good affection, as it was by your Lordſhip.

And God grant that by the influence of his Grace it may be ſome way uſeful to thoſe that read it, to carry on that great end and deſigne for which it is intended; I mean, to encourage men againſt the Wiles and Temptations of the Devil; and to perſwade them to the works of Righteouſneſs

and

and Goodneſs, of Piety and Devotion, of Juſtice and Charity, of Humility and Obedience, of Sobriety and Temperance.

God Almighty direct and aſſiſt your Lordſhip in the management of thoſe great Affairs committed to your charge, and continue you long in that famous City, to the Glory of his Name, the Credit of true Religion, the Honour of our Soveraign, and the happineſs of the People at preſent under your Government; that you may reap in this World ſatisfaction of Mind in the diſcharge of a good Conſcience; and in the World to come, everlaſting Life: Which is the hearty Prayer of him who is,

MY LORD,

Jan. 1. 168$\frac{2}{3}$.

Your Lordſhip's

Very humble and moſt

Obedient Servant,

John James.

A SERMON

Preached before the

Lord Mayor, &c.

Decemb. 24. 1682.

1 JOH. 3. 8.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

NO sooner were the Apostate Angels banished the Court of Heaven, and by the just Judgment of God cast into the *bottomless Pit* to undergo *the vengeance of eternal fire*, but the sense of their torments exasperated their malice, and caused them to envy the felicity of Man; which stayed not long within the breasts of those accursed Spirits, but like a sudden and unexpected Floud that overflows its banks, and breaks down

all reſiſtance, they were reſtleſs in contriving the miſery of their fellow-creatures, and active as the flames of fire, till they had accompliſht this their horrid deſigne in tempting Man to apoſtatize from his Maker, that his Poſterity might become obnoxious to the ſame *everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his Angels.*

And ſuch was the unwearied activity, together with the ſubtilty of that cunning Serpent, that his helliſh Plot ſoon took effect, in ſeducing our firſt Parents to hearken too attentively to his Enchantments, and through his treacherous ſuggeſtions, to queſtion the truth of what God had ſpoken, and ſoon after to violate what he had commanded. And when this firſt Stratagem too fatally ſucceeded in the world, and to the ruine of man directly anſwered the deſigne and expectation of the Devil, it inſpired a new life into that old Serpent, and encouraged him with the greater vigour to range up and down the world, *ſeeking whom he might devour* and deſtroy; that he hath long ſince uſurpt a principality and dominion over the Souls of men, and to this day continues *the Prince of the power of the Air*, nay, *the God of this World, working in the Children of diſobedience*, and *leading them captive at his will.*

But the All-compaſſionate God pitying the Shipwrackt condition of Man, did not, as in juſtice he might, totally abhor, and eternally reject him: for ſince by his fall he had diveſted himſelf of his primitive Integrity, proved a Rebel to his Lord and Maker, liſted himſelf into the ſervice of the Devil, and ſo ſtood at open defiance with Heaven it ſelf; God Almighty, by the moſt ſignal inſtance of Wiſdom, Power, and Goodneſs, hath at once manifeſted his unſpeakable Love to Mankind, and his implacable Enmity to thoſe accurſed Spi-

rits,

rits, by ſending his Son into the World, as the Captain of man's Salvation; who ſolemnly proclaimed open War with the Devil, bid defiance to him at his entrance into the World, and by Almighty power will overcome his aſpiring Pride and deſperate Malice, reſcue men from the hands of that *roaring Lion*, and ſo at once demoliſh his uſurped Kingdom, and deſtroy his works from off the face of the Earth.

All which, as it was repreſented to man immediately after his fall, *Gen.* 3. 15. that *the Seed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the Serpents head*, and that Promiſe frequently renewed in ſucceeding Ages: ſo in the *fulneſs of time* it was happily begun by the Incarnation of the Son of God, who came to deliver men from the tyranny of the Devil, to inveſt them with the liberty of the Sons of God, and to bring *everlaſting Righteouſneſs* into the World; is ſtill continued by his prevalency over the Devil, in confronting his Power, reſtraining his Malice, weakening his Intereſt in the World, and diſpoſſeſſing thoſe evil Spirits from the heart of man; and, when *time ſhall be no more*, ſhall be perfectly accompliſhed, to the eternal horrour, confuſion and amazement of the *Devil and his Angels*. Which is the juſt deſigne and proper import of theſe words: *For this purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the Devil.*

By the *works of the Devil* is here meant all manner of ſin, *v.* 5. for as he was the firſt Author, ſo he is the continual Promoter of that Corruption which reſides in the breaſt of men, and that Impiety which reigns in the World. So that all ſin, of what nature or quality ſoever it be, is the Brat and Off-ſpring of that diabolical Spirit, the proper effect of his ſpleen and malice to

mankind, and, in the expreſſion of our Apoſtle, *the works of the Devil:* for, *he that committeth ſin, is of the Devil; for the Devil ſinn'd from the beginning.*

The Son of God is the ſecond perſon in the bleſſed Trinity, God coequal and coeternal with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt. Who was *manifeſt in the fleſh*, became man, *dwelt among us*, and died for us, *that he might deſtroy the works of the Devil:* i. e. to *teach and enable men to deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world.*

That the Son of God was thus *manifeſt to deſtroy the works of the Devil*, will moſt evidently appear from the conſideration of three very material inſtances.

1. That the Son of God hath uſed thoſe means, and taken that courſe, which does directly tend, and is abundantly able to ſubvert the power of the Devil.
2. That in many remarkable inſtances he hath already ſupplanted his Power in the World.
3. That he will certainly obtain a moſt perfect Victory over the Devil, before he reſigne up his Commiſſion to his Father.

I. The Son of God hath uſed thoſe means, and taken that courſe which does directly tend, and is abundantly able to ſubvert the power of the Devil. The truth of which Propoſition will be fully illuſtrated, from the conſideration of four things.

1. From the whole courſe and frame of his Life, whilſt manifeſt in the World; wherein he was ſo far from complying with, that he did utterly diſcountenance

nance the works of the Devil. The Generation of Mankind, according to the courſe of Nature, is too much attended with the heat of Luſt, and the propagation of Original Corruption into the Embryo at its firſt conception: therefore the ever-bleſſed Jeſus coming into the World, was conceived by a moſt ſtupendous and admirable manner; the power of the Holy Ghoſt overſhadowing a pure Virgin, that ſhe became great with Child of the Son of God: and when the number of her months were accompliſhed, ſhe brought him forth into the World as richly adorned with divine and ſupernatural Graces, as he was poor in reſpect of outward appearance. When his Infancy was paſt, that he came to the uſe of Reaſon and Underſtanding, a time wherein other men begin to diſcover the natural corruption of their hearts, by their actual rebellion againſt God, the *Son of God* (truly ſo called from his divine-like nature and holy life, as well as his miraculous and happy birth) begins his Converſation with an even and a regular Piety, free from thoſe ſinful paſſions, though attended with the natural infirmities which mankind labours under; and accordingly regulates them according to the Laws of Nature, and the Pleaſure of his heavenly Father. His Charity was truly Chriſtian and diffuſive, ſuch as extended to all orders and degrees of men. His meek and ſweet diſpoſition, with his humble and modeſt Spirit, ſuch as appears in Infants before they can diſcern between good and evil. His converſing with men was free and familiar, eaſie and unaffected. His dutiful reſpects toward his Friends and Relations, tranſcending that of the moſt ingenuous diſpoſition, though cultivated by the early advantages of a pious Education. Neither did he ſuffer his Religion

gion to decline, as ſome men do, when their years increaſe; but as he multiplied days, and *grew in ſtature, he increaſed in wiſdom and favour with God and man,* Luke 2. 52.

He was careful to omit no duty, and ſo deſirous to give no offence; that where he might lawfully conform to the Cuſtoms of his Nation and Kindred, he did not with a moroſe and churliſh diſpoſition (like the men of our Age) depart from them, but with great freedom, and a cheerful ſpirit, comply with and conform to them: Witneſs his Circumciſion the eighth day, his being baptized by *John*, his paying Tribute, *&c.* But where the ſacred Bonds of Religion required and commanded his obedience, neither the violent aſſaults of
Mat. 16. 22,23 Satan, nor the courteous compellations of Friends, could conſtrain him to violate the deareſt Heaven. He eſteemed Obedience the beſt Sacrifice to his Father, and
Heb. 10. 7. preferred the ſervice of God before the love and kindneſs of his deareſt Friends; chuſing rather to die, than to ſin againſt God.

For when his Enemies were moſt furiouſly inraged againſt him, and conſulted to put him to death, he makes no evaſion, nor unjuſt excuſes; he denies not the truth, nor diſtruſts his Father; but committing
Mat. c. 26. c. 29. his Caſe to the providence of God, he meekly endures their affronts and injuries; and when their malice was ſo great as to put him to death, he patiently bears their indignation, their fury, and their wrath, like a good man and a glorious Martyr, praying for his Enemies till he gave up the Ghoſt.

Behold here a Mirrour of Piety, the Wonder of the world for his Devotion and Charity! Was there any action of his life, or the leaſt circumſtance attending his actions,

actions, that might justly bear the charge of sin? None certainly: for from his birth to his death, he was a most virulent Enemy to that wicked One, and a perfect hater of his works. The Devils themselves confess he was *the holy One of God:* His most malicious Enemies could not but say he *did all things well: Pilate* that sate in Judgment upon him, could *find no evil in him*; and therefore according to his Wife's admonition, proclaims him before a full Assembly of Scribes and Elders, to be *a just person.* Mark 5. 7. Mat. 27. 19, 23, 24.

So that his whole Life was but one continued Series of actions perfectly designed against that wicked One. His Baptism was his solemn inauguration into this Office. His Conversation the most plain and easie, the most full and comprehensive, the most encouraging and authentick Pattern for his Followers to imitate in their Christian course of life, in defiance to that grand Impostor; that while they behold him as *the Captain of their Salvation,* despising the World, confronting the Devil, bearing Afflictions with patience, Persecutions with cheerfulness, resisting and overcoming Temptations, forgiving and loving his Enemies, willing to live so long as God pleased, yet ready to die the most ignominious accursed death, since it was the determinate counsel of God: Whilst his Disciples thus consider his regular Piety, his undaunted Courage, they may learn to *do likewise*; and in opposition to the Prince of Darkness, be encouraged to do, to suffer, and to be, whatever God shall be pleased to call them to. Mat. 11. 28, 29.

'Twas *Plato*'s opinion, as *Tully* reports, that if Vertue could but admit herself to view, she would appear so amiable in the eyes of all men, that Vice in the most costly dress and gorgeous array would appear most con-

contemptible and bare, if compared with her. If incorporated Vertue in the Philoſophers judgment would be ſo attractive of mens affections, certainly the unſpotted innocency of an incarnate Deity ſhould be much more powerful to invite and perſwade his Followers to the love and practice of Piety and Goodneſs, than the former conceit would be to engage men to the love and practice of Vertue: So that if men would conſider that grand Exemplar of Piety, *the life of the holy Jeſus*, his Example muſt needs inſpirit their minds with the moſt active diligence,& undaunted courage, to fight manfully under his Banner, as *the Captain of their Salvation*, againſt the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil, to *run with patience the race that is ſet before them*, and to continue in that ſpiritual Combat his faithful Servants and Souldiers unto their lifes end.

Heb. 12. 1,2,3.

2. From ſome remarkable actions of his Life, and eſpecially the bitter paſſions of his Death, whereby he hath given a fatal blow to the power and deſignes of the Devil. The Son of God is not to be conſidered onely as a meer man, though juſt and innocent, but in reference alſo to that grand undertaking, [The Redemption of the World from its ſlavery to Sin and ſubjection to Satan], the Saviour of the World, the Redeemer of Mankind: His very Birth ſtruck a terrour to thoſe evil Spirits; his Life ſhone with ſo glorious a light, that it confounded the Kingdom of Darkneſs: But the moſt ſignal Conqueſt he obtained over Death, and the Devil that had the power of it, was by his meritorious Death and powerful Reſurrection.

Eph. 2. 13, &c.

For when the *Jews* had crucified the *Lord of Life*, and laid him full low, even in the duſt, that they began to triumph and applaud themſelves in their ſuppoſed Victory,

Victory, the Devils alſo rejoyced, as if they had vanquiſhed the power of God. How miraculouſly did the Counſels of Heaven defeat the carnal policy of men, and the malicious deſignes of the Devil too! That death which they executed upon the *Lord's Anointed*, was converted to their own deſtruction, and, contrary to the Devils expectation, moſt happily proved the greateſt Engine to rout his Forces, and deſtroy his Kingdom. For can *God die?* or *his holy One ſee corruption?* No; the price of man's Redemption being paid by the Sufferings of the Son of God, he broke through the powers of the Grave; and in deſpight of the Devil, Hell, and Death, aroſe a mighty Conquerour over them all; and as a Trophey of Victory, *led captivity captive*, and treated them as he pleaſed: And when he had given ſufficient demonſtration of his Reſurrection, he aſcended gloriouſly into Heaven, from whence immediately he ſent down the Holy Ghoſt upon his Diſciples, and prevalently interceding with his Father, received power and authority to demoliſh the Kingdom of Satan, and by delivering men from his inſulting Tyranny, to conſtitute a Kingdom of his own; and to preſerve and keep it from the furious aſſaults of the Devil, by the power of his Providence, and the conduct of his Spirit. And now he is ſet down at the right hand of God, he continueth for ever; and having an unchangeable Prieſthood, is able to *ſave* his Church and People *to the utmoſt, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them*, Heb. 7. 24, 25. By which, and other ſuch remarkable paſſages, preceding, accompanying, and following his death, he hath obtained a conſiderable intereſt in the very Forts and Dwellings of the Prince of this World, by *turning many ſouls from darkneſs*

Rom. 6. 9, 10.

Acts 1. 9.

Eph. 2. 19, 20, 21, 22.

neſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

3. From the grand intent and deſigne of his Doctrine, which is moſt aptly contrived to deſtroy the works of the Devil, to deliver men from the power and dominion of ſin, and to direct and encourage them to Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs. For,

Firſt. The Chriſtian Religion delivers the ſtricteſt Precepts for the rule of good living, with the greateſt Majeſty and Authority conceivable. In general, it
Mat.22.37,38, 39. commands men *to love the Lord their God with all their heart, and with all their ſoul, and with all their mind,* and
Mat. 7. 12. *their neighbours as themſelves*; to *do as they would be done unto*; to reject the Devil, and deſpiſe the World:
Jam.4. 7. 1 Joh.2. 15. 1 Theſſ.5.22. to avoid every *occaſion of ſin*, and *appearance of evil*; and *whatever things are true, whatever things are honeſt, whatever things are juſt, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there be any vertue, and if there be any praiſe, ſeriouſly to think of theſe things*, and faithfully to do them, *Phil.*4. 8, 9.

Heb. 11. 3. 1 Tim.6.15,16 More particularly, it requires men to acknowledge one God the Creator and Governour of the World, to conceive him as an infinite and incomprehenſible Being, to teſtifie the inward reverence and devotion of their
Rom.12.1,2. hearts, by the moſt ready and univerſal obedience to his Will; to love him for his Goodneſs; to ſtand in awe of
1 Joh. 4. 8. his Juſtice and his Power; to depend upon his Provi-
Mat. 10. 28. dence for their protection, and to expreſs their thank-
Mat. 6. 25. fulneſs for the receipt of his Mercies: to be ſerious in
1 Theſſ. 5. 18. all parts of his Worſhip; to live always as in his pre-
Joh. 4. 24. ſence; and to manifeſt their reſpect to God, by their reverend behaviour to every thing that is appropriate to his ſervice, or participates of his nature: Faithfully

to

to believe all divine Revelations; humbly to ſubmit to all the diſpenſations of his Providence, and ſincerely to obſerve all the manifeſtations of his Will and Pleaſure: To believe on the Son of God as the Saviour of the World, the great Doctor and Governour of the Church, and the alone *Mediator between God and Man.* Mat. 1. 21. Jam. 4. 12. 1 Tim. 2. 5.

It preſcribes the particular Offices, engaging men to a due regulation of all their thoughts, words, and deeds, that do immediately reſpect their own perſons. It directs them to Temperance and Moderation in eating and drinking, in ſleeping and recreation; to Chaſtity and Purity both in the married and unmarried eſtate; to Humility and Modeſty in the diſpoſition and carriage of men: To reſtrain every unruly Paſſion within the bounds of Reaſon, and to regulate every the moſt lawful Affection according to the rules of Religion: To guide and manage their Behaviour with ſobriety and underſtanding, and to order their Diſcourſe with gravity and diſcretion. Luke 21. 34. Acts 24. 16.

It lays down alſo the moſt excellent Rules of Charity and Juſtice toward their Neighbours, obliging every man to the greateſt Sincerity, Uprightneſs, and Integrity to each other; to an univerſal Innocence and Harmleſneſs in all actions; to make Compenſation where Offences have been committed; to carry a due Reſpect and Reverence, proper to the ſeveral Orders and Degrees of men; to obſerve all the poſitive Acts of Juſtice, diſtributive and commutative, according to the Offices of that Calling wherein divine Providence hath diſpoſed a man's Station; and to obſerve all the duties of Love and Charity, which the neceſſities of others require, and the abilities of men do qualifie them for. In a word, the Chriſtian Profeſſion is ſo pure, ſo Mat. 5. 23, 24, 25. Rom. 13. 7. Gal. 6. 10.

undefiled a Religion, that it prohibits the leaſt impurity, and gives no licenſe to the ſmalleſt ſin: for, *the grace of God that bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world; looking for that bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

Tit. 2. 11, 12, 13, 14.

Secondly. It propounds the moſt convincing Arguments to encourage men againſt the Wiles and Temptations of the Devil, and to perſwade them to the ſincere and conſtant practice of Vertue and Goodneſs. It threatens the Wicked with the Wrath and Indignation of God at preſent; and promiſeth to the Vertuous and Good, the Providence of God, as his infinite Wiſdom ſhall judge moſt expedient for them. But becauſe it is manifeſt God doth not call Mankind to an account in this World, nor deal with them in ſtrict Juſtice according to their deſerts, (for his external Diſpenſations are very promiſcuous both to the Good and Bad) therefore the Goſpel doth ſeriouſly preſent to the conſideration of men, an infallible certainty of a Judgment to come, when God ſhall render to every man according to his works, 2 *Cor.* 5. 10. It informs us of the nature of the Judge, the dreadful preparations for his coming to Judgment, the terrible appearance of his Majeſty, the great proceedings of that day, and the irreverſible Sentence paſt upon all concerned in it; that we may be confidently aſſured there are Rewards in ſtore for every man, that *the wickedneſs of the wicked ſhall be upon him, and the righteouſneſs of the righteous ſhall be upon him.*

Acts 17. 31. 2 Pet. 3. 10. 2 Theſſ. 1. 7. Mat. 25. 30. *ad fin.*

It

It repreſents the greateſt fulneſs and exuberancy of divine Love: *Life and Immortality* to the Vertuous and Good; but the utmoſt ſeverity of divine Juſtice, *Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguiſh*, to the Vicious and Bad. Rom. 2. 7, 8, 9, 10.

It aſſures to all that live according to the Rules of that holy Inſtitution, eternal and ſolid Bliſs both in Body and Soul: that the one, *which was corruptible, ſhall put on incorruption; which was ſown in diſhonour, ſhall be raiſed in glory; which was ſown in weakneſs, ſhall be raiſed in power*, 2 Cor. 15. 42, 43. And the faculties of the other ſo eminently transformed, that the Underſtanding, which now ſeeth the moſt perſpicuous things but darkly and through a Glaſs, ſhall be endued with the greateſt meaſure of knowledge, and entertained with the cleareſt ſight of the divine nature, to behold with infinite ſatisfaction the glorious attributes of God, and the wonderful Counſels and effects of them all, in his works of Providence toward his ſeveral Creatures. The Will and Affections ſhall be perfectly transformed into the divine likeneſs; that Anger, Envy, Hatred, and ſuch troubleſome Paſſions, ſhall be utterly aboliſhed; Deſire ſhall be ſped into Fruition, and Hope ſhall be ſwallowed up in Victory; and thoſe delightful and raviſhing affections of Love and Joy, ſhall ſurvive and remain to the eternal conſolation of Soul and Body.

But it threatens the *Wicked* that they *ſhall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God*, where are Flames ſo quick and ſcorching, that they ſhall ſeize upon Soul and Body; Torments that ſhall always be beginning, never ending; which the damned themſelves by their Malice ſhall increaſe, and by the gnaſhing of their Teeth ſhall help to be their own Executioners. Mark 9. 24 26.

So.

So that thoſe who comply with the Wiles and Temptations of the Devil, muſt *expect a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation which ſhall devour them*, Heb. 10. 27. but thoſe who reſiſt that evil Spirit, and ſeriouſly renounce his works, may expect that glorious *recompence of reward which God hath prepared for thoſe that love and ſerve him*, Heb. 11. 39, 40.

Thirdly. To this purpoſe, that divine Oeconomy, which according to the Sanctions of the Goſpel is adminiſtred in the Chriſtian Church, was inſtituted by the Son of God. That the Miniſters of the Goſpel, as opportunity ſerves, and neceſſity requires, adminiſter the ſacred Rites of the Chriſtian Religion in the Church of God, by baptizing ſuch as are duly diſpoſed for that ſolemn Ordinance; that thereby they may be liſted into the ſervice of Chriſt, and by that religious Sacrament be obliged to fight manfully under his Banner againſt the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil: And diſtribute the Holy Communion to thoſe pious and humble Souls, that are religiouſly diſpoſed to celebrate the honour of God in that ſacred Inſtitution; that they may be encouraged to *quench the fiery darts of the devil*, and *have grace to ſerve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.*

Mat. 28. 19.

Luke 22. 19, 20.

To them 'tis commanded to ſolemnize the Worſhip of God in publick, either as Prieſts to wait at the Altar of the Lord, to intercede with his Majeſty in the behalf of his people, and to preſent in their ſtead Prayers and Supplications, and Thankſgivings to him; or as Embaſſadors to treat with the People in the buſineſs of Religion, and reveal the Will of God unto them; to explain and confirm to their Underſtandings the Principles of Chriſtianity, to repreſent to their Judgment and Rea-

Mat. 10. 12, 13
1 Tim. 2. 1, 2.

Mat. 28. 20.
2 Cor. 5. 20.

Reaſon, the vileneſs of ſin, and the reaſonableneſs of Gods ſervice; that men may be reclaimed from their ſinful and wicked ways, and become *a living ſacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God.*

But when ſinners are obſtinate and hard to be entreated, the Cenſures of the Church are put into their hands, to exerciſe the power of the Keys in puniſhing the pertinacious, and caſting them out of the Church, that they may be brought to a juſt and lively apprehenſion of their ſins; and from the Judgment of God executed upon them by his Miniſters in the Church, be perſwaded to reform and amend their lives, that they may not fall into the hands of divine Juſtice in the World to come; and ſo upon ſufficient Evidence of their Repentance, receive Abſolution, be diſſolved from the Bonds of Satan, and admitted into the boſome of the Church again. For this power our Lord and Maſter committed to his Apoſtles, and in them to the ſucceeding Governours of the Church, *Mat.* 18. 18. *Whatſoever ye ſhall bind on earth, ſhall be bound in heaven; and whatſoever ye ſhall looſe on earth, ſhall be looſed in heaven.* Which Commiſſion was renewed again after his Reſurrection, when he breathed on them the Holy Ghoſt, *Joh.* 20. 22, 23.

Theſe are the principal means delivered in the Goſpel, and inſtituted by the Son of God, to deliver men from the dominion of ſin and Satan; and thereby *to deſtroy the works of the Devil,* by taking men off from the love and practice of ſin.

4. From the miſſion and deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt into the World; where divine Inſpiration is in two reſpects very remarkable: to take away the ſins of the World, and to promote the ſervice and honour of God.

Firſt,

First. By enduing the Son of God and his holy Apoſtles with power from above, whereby they were enabled to confirm and ratifie the truth of the Chriſtian Doctrine by the working of Miracles. If Chriſt had not *done thoſe works which no other perſon did*, he would not, for in truth he could not, have obliged mankind to believe and obey it: which is the proper import and meaning of our Saviour's expreſſion, *Joh.* 15.24. 'Twas therefore extreamly neceſſary that he ſhould manifeſt the Divinity of his perſon, and confirm the truth of the Goſpel, by ſuch ſignal Teſtimonies as were uncontrolable: And ſuch was his infinite Wiſdom and Power, that while he was converſant among men, he gave the World all the ſatisfaction that was poſſible, that he came from God; when he wrought ſuch miraculous works as were never heard of from the beginning of the World, preſented them boldly to all Spectators, and committed the tryal of their reality to the teſt of their ſences; which was an infallible evidence that *the ſpirit of the Lord was upon him*, and the *power of God had overſhadowed him.* But becauſe he was *mightily declared to be the Son of God by his reſurrection from the dead*, as *through the eternal ſpirit he offered himſelf to God*; ſo by the mighty aſſiſtance of the ſame holy Spirit, he aroſe again from the dead, and continues alive for ever.

Heb. 9. 14. Rom. 8. 11.

And becauſe he committed the promulgation of the Goſpel to his Apoſtles, whom he ſent as Embaſſadours to preach Salvation to the World, and exhort ſinners to be reconciled to God; the powers of the Holy Ghoſt was indiſpenſably requiſite to inform their Underſtandings with the Mind of God, to reveal the ſacred Myſteries of Religion clearly to their apprehenſions, that they be aſſured of their heavenly Call to the divine Employment:

ployment: therefore they had apparitions of Angels, and received the Bath-col, voices from Heaven. So St. *Paul* by a moſt miraculous Light from Heaven, is ſtricken down to the Earth, and called to the Apoſtleſhip, *Acts* 9. Hereupon he became ſo ſerious and earneſt to aſſert both his Calling and Goſpel to deſcend from Heaven, *Gal.* 1. 1. *Paul an Apoſtle, not of men, neither by men, but by Jeſus Chriſt, and God the Father.* They had extatical Viſions; *Peter* was in a Trance, *Paul* wrapt up to the third Heavens: They had monitory Dreams and Impulſes from the Spirit; by all which, they had a full aſſurance of the Divinity of their Meſſage, and the truth of their Call to the Apoſtleſhip.

But 'twas equally neceſſary, for the Conviction of the Unbelieving World, that they ſhould confirm the divine Authority of theſe things, by ſufficient external Arguments: therefore they were endued with the gift of Tongues, and the power of working Miracles; when according to the promiſe of our Lord, the Holy Ghoſt deſcended from Heaven upon a full Aſſembly, as they were met together to ſolemnize the Worſhip of God, *Acts* 2. that they began to ſpeak with other Tongues, and to utter divers ſorts of Languages, inſomuch that their Auditors admired the marvelous works of God, when they heard the Servants of Chriſt ſpeaking every one in their own Tongue. Thus they were qualified by an extraordinary Inſpiration, to teach all Nations, and to preach the Goſpel throughout the whole World. And as they had diverſity of Gifts, and different Adminiſtrations, ſo they were enabled by the power of the Holy Ghoſt to work Miracles, and in the Name of Chriſt to do even what they liſt. To them was given the power of healing all manner of Diſeaſes, the raiſing the Dead to life. But one great and ſignal Gift they received, which to the highth of admiration they manifeſted to the World; the frequent effuſion of the Spirit upon themſelves, the communicating of

2 Cor. 12. 8, 9, 10, 11.

it to others by praying, preaching, and laying on of hands, whereby evil Spirits became ſubject to them, that they prevailed over the Devil and his deluding Oracles, whoſe Tongues they ſilenc'd, whoſe Forgeries they diſcover'd, whoſe Favorites they ſtrangely and in a moment ſtruck dead, and reſtrained the malice and fury of Lucifer himſelf.

Were theſe the effects of any other power than the Spirit of the Lord? Was it ever heard that a meer Mortal was able to do the like? to alter the courſe of Nature, and produce effects directly contrary to the production of natural cauſes? Is it within the power of the Mighty? or can the Devils themſelves bring it to paſs? No: It requires an Omnipotent arm; no leſs than that which created the World, and ſetled the particular Beings therein: to change their courſes, to alter their natures, to work not onely with ſlender and unlikely means, but without and againſt all probable methods, certainly none but the Spirit of the Almighty can do thus. When therefore the power of working Miracles is the alone work of a Deity, and ſuch remarkable inſtances were plainly manifeſt by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, to diſcover the Divinity, and procure the belief of his Doctrine; it's a plain Argument, that that extraordinary power with which they were inveſted, was on purpoſe deſigned to diſcard the Devil, and confront his Power; becauſe that Doctrine which was confirmed by them, is directly contrary to the deſignes and projects of that evil Spirit.

Secondly. By its continual influence upon the Underſtanding and Wills of men, to enable them to reſiſt the Devil, and overcome his Temptations. Though the Doctrine of the Goſpel had ſuch an undeniable Evidence as the Power of Miracles, to aſcertain the truth and verity of it, that one would think no man, which believes the matter of fact, that ſuch miracles were wrought, ſhould doubt of the truth, or queſtion the divine Authority of the Chriſtian Religion, and con-

conſequently would ſoon reſigne up their Underſtanding to the obedience of Faith, to be governed by the Laws of that divine Inſtitution: yet he that conſiders how little men regard the Authority of that divine Teſtimony, and conſider the excellency of the Goſpel diſcovery, and how careleſs men are to be ſtrict and ſerious in their Converſations, and how ſoon debauched by the moſt eaſie Temptation, who profeſs to believe Jeſus Chriſt to be the Son of God, and aſſent to his Doctrine as infallibly true, will ſoon perceive the neceſſity of ſome ſupernatural aſſiſtance, to bring the hearts of men to the love, and their lives to the practice of all neceſſary truths contained therein, over and above that miraculous diffuſion at the firſt delivery and preaching of it.

And bleſſed be the Name of God, ſuch is the large and plentiful effuſion of divine Grace now under the diſpenſation of the Goſpel, that 'tis always ready at hand to aſſiſt the ſpirits of men, in all religious purpoſes and holy undertakings, *Joh.* 14. 26. 16. And in ſeveral places of the Goſpel, the Spirit is promiſed to the devout and humble petitions of honeſt Chriſtians, *Luke* 11. 13. *Joh.* 16. 23. 26. So that the moſt degenerate Soul that does but ſeriouſly apply his mind to *fear God and keep his Commandments*, will find ſuch continual aſſiſtance from the bleſſed ſpirit of Grace, as will enable him to mortifie his own Corruption, to quench the fiery darts of the Devil, to vanquiſh all oppoſitions in the way to Goodneſs, and with eaſe and pleaſure to do the Will of God.

For this very purpoſe the Son of God intercedes with his Father, and preſents our Prayers to the Throne of Grace by vertue of his own interceſſion, that the Promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt may be continued to his Church to the end of the world, to ſanctifie the hearts of his People, and to fill their Souls with all thoſe graces that accompany Salvation; to enlighten the Underſtanding, to convince the Judgment, to awaken the Conſciences of men, that they may believe and

conſider the great and weighty Principles of Religion, and be preſerved from all falſe Doctrine, Hereſies, and Schiſms : to preſs upon their conſideration the folly and unreaſonableneſs of ſin, with the dreadful conſequences of a wicked life ; the excellency of true Religion and Goodneſs, with the bleſſed effects of a vertuous Converſation, that men may be perſwaded to *depart from evil, and do good :* to remove the obſtinacy and perverſeneſs that is natural to fallen man, that their Spirits may become pliable and ſubmiſſive to the providential dealings of God, reſpective and obedient to the Laws and Conſtitutions of Heaven, and entirely devoted to his Will and Pleaſure : to confirm their Faith, increaſe their Integrity; to aſſiſt them againſt Temptations, to ſupport them with patience under afflictions ; to compleat their Charity, to perfect their Repentance, and to enable them by Promiſes, Encouragements, and Gifts, to ſuffer for the Lord Jeſus, and the profeſſion of the Goſpel, if called to it. All this and much more is the Promiſe of the Father, to purchaſe of the Son of God, and the gift of them both to give the holy Spirit to the Church, firſt to *ſanctifie* and make it good, then to *preſerve it ſpotleſs and unblamable to the coming of the Lord.*

Gal. 5. 22. 1 Theſſ. 5. 23.

Theſe are the principal means invented by the Wiſdom of God to *take away the ſins of the world, to deſtroy the works of the devil ;* and in infinite mercy preſented to mankind by his onely begotten Son, to *deliver them from the power of darkneſs*, and by *turning them away from their iniquities, to tranſlate them into the kingdom of his dear Son.* And what can the wit of man conceive, what doth the weakneſs of men want as farther needful to promote and carry on this bleſſed and glorious deſigne ? What could God have done more to ſubvert the power of the Devil, and to reconcile Mankind to himſelf ?

If he had raiſed up ſome mighty Prophet in the World, and furniſhed him with the Inſpiration of the Almighty, that he had ſpoken as one having Authority, and commended his Meſſage

Meſſage to us in the Name of the Lord; we ſhould certainly have received him in the Name of a Prophet: or if an Angel had deſcended from Heaven, and appeared viſibly to us Mortals, and delivered his Embaſſage to us in a Seraphick manner, and backt it with Reaſons clear as his Angelical nature; we ſhould certainly have admired the goodneſs of God, and acknowledged our ſelves obliged to ſo gracious a Diſpenſation. But that God himſelf ſhould deſcend from thoſe Regions above into this dark and diſmal World, become one like us, one of us, and ſo in a way agreeable to our humane capacities, deliver us the Records of Heaven, tell us the terms on which our Eternity depends, aſſure us upon his undoubted Veracity, that upon our obedience or diſobedience to them, Heaven or Hell, Life or Death are aſcertained to us; that he ſhould delineate to our very eyes in plain and legible Characters, the excellency of his Doctrine by the Piety and Innocency of his Life, and ſo recommend his Precepts to our practice by his own Example ſet before us; that he ſhould convince and aſſure us of the Divinity of his Perſon and Doctrine, by many and undeniable Miracles; that he ſhould ſeal the truth of what he delivered by his own bloud; offer up his Life a Sacrifice to death, to procure life to the ſinful World; that by his divine power he ſhould riſe out of the Grave, gloriouſly aſcend to Heaven, intercede with his Father on our behalf, and from thence ſend us *another Comforter, even the ſpirit of Truth*, which ſhould inform our minds with the knowledge of all neceſſary truths, and bring us to the love and practice of all Chriſtian Vertues and Graces: Certainly this method is abundantly able to *deſtroy the works of the Devil*, and to prevail with ſinners to lead godly and pious lives. Which will moſt evidently appear, if we proceed to conſider the ſecond Argument to illuſtrate the truth of the Apoſtles Aſſertion.

II. The Son of God hath in many remarkable inſtances already

already ſupplanted the Power of the Devil, in delivering many Souls from the tyranny and dominion of that inſulting Enemy, notwithſtanding the great diſadvantages and diſcouragements that the Chriſtian Religion hath met with in the World both from Jews and Gentiles, from the firſt plantation of the Goſpel until now.

For though the Jews were *circumciſed the eighth day*, and in their Childhood kept in cruel bondage under their Parents and Maſters, who conſtrained them to learn the Law of *Moſes*; and when they came to riper years, were taught by the *Scribes and Phariſees*, who *ſate in Moſes Chair*, that their Religion was eternal, and the Oeconomy thereof never to be altered; and therefore were bound to reject any perſon that ſhould broach any other Doctrine, to diſcard him from their Synagogues, to ſtop his mouth that he might not ſpeak, and their ears that they might not hear. And 'tis notorious that the Gentiles were no leſs fortified in their Heathen Rites, and ſuperſtitious Cuſtoms, every Nation having their reſpective Deities, whom they conſtantly adored and offered Sacrifice to; and ſome of them ſo careful to ſecure the honour of their Gods, and all under their Authority in their Idolatrous obſervances, that as *Melanchton* notes in his Epiſtle to his Comment upon the *Romans*, every *Athenian* made a Vow at his admiſſion to the Liberties and Franchiſes of the City, *ſe pugnare pro diis, ſolum, & cum aliis*, not onely to fight valiantly in the front of an Army, to defend and vindicate their Gods, but, like the Roman *Scæva*, to withſtand whole Legions.

Adde to all this, the Oppoſition that was to be expected without, the Scoffs and Jears that Chriſtians muſt expect from their Neighbours, the Cenſures of their Laws, and the diſpleaſure of their Governours; the meanneſs of Chriſt, and the unworthineſs of his Apoſtles, the poverty and weakneſs of them both; that they were utterly unable to ſupply the wants of their Diſciples, or defend them from the malice and cruelty

cruelty of their Enemies. But above all, consider the corruption of their hearts, and the contrariety of the Gospel to their former course of life, forbidding the least Impurity, and threatening vengeance against the smallest sin which they poor wretches were wholy immersed in; and in honour of their Gods, were not onely taught to practise, but commanded to observe.

And yet notwithstanding such great contradictions, the Gospel of Christ, which is *the power of God to salvation*, constrained both Jews and Gentiles with a holy violence to break asunder their unlawful Oaths, to disclaim their former Religions, to flie from the snares and delusions of the Devil, and to become Proselytes to the Religion of Jesus.

For when that glorious Light the *Sun of Righteousness* appeared in the World, the beams of his Majesty were immediately dispersed over the face of the Earth, and his Glory in a short time dispelled that hideous darkness which had overspread the World, and *brought Life and Immortality to light*. For so the Evangelist tells us, that by the miraculous instinct and conduct of a Star, the news of his birth was revealed to the furthermost parts of the Earth, as soon as ever he was born; and the Princes thereof came to pay their Adoration to him, and when they saw him, *fell down and worshipped him*, Mat. 2. And when he entered upon his Prophetick Office, though he *did not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets*, yet the Children of men flockt in abundance to hear him, deservedly counting it their greatest honour to become the Disciples of so glorious a Master. So great Worth they saw in his Person, and such Excellency in his Doctrine; such glorious Rewards he propounded to them, & such intolerable miseries he warn'd them to flie from, that they made hast to deliver themselves from the bonds of sin, by which they were detained Captives to the will of the Devil, and without delay became the Followers of Christ, glorying in nothing more, than in being Christians. And

And as our Lord himſelf did ſo miraculouſly reſcue the Souls of men from their ſubjection to Sin and Satan, ſo that life and vigour which continually attends the diſpenſation of the Goſpel, hath been illuſtriouſly manifeſt in oppoſition to all the Powers of Darkneſs, and the Malice of Hell it ſelf. For as his Apoſtles went up and down preaching the Goſpel, the Lord *added to the Church dayly ſuch as ſhould be ſaved:* Three thouſand Souls became Converts to the Chriſtian Faith at one Sermon of St. *Peter's*, *Acts* 2.41. In the Roman Empire and the Province of *Judea*, multitudes, multitudes thronged into the Kingdom of Chriſt; and not onely the weak and impotent people, but the great ones, and wiſe men of the Earth, cheerfully embraced this divine Religion, accounting their Strength weakneſs, and their Wiſdom folly, until then. *Cornelius* a Centurion became a Proſelyte to it; *Nero's* Family had ſome Saints; *Sergius Paulus* a Proconſul, and *Dionyſius* the famous *Areopagite* at *Athens*, became Converts to the Chriſtian Faith. And the Hiſtories of the Church preſent us with many and many excellent Perſons of great eſteem for their admirable Learning, and vaſt Endowments, who in a ſhort ſpace of time voluntarily forſook the Pomps and Vanities of this wicked World, and ſincerely devoting themſelves to the ſervice of Chriſt, were deſervedly famous in their Generations for Piety and Devotions. Which very Argument *Arnobius* inſiſts upon when he reaſoned with the Heathen to perſwade them to receive the Faith of Chriſt; that men of the greateſt Wits and Parts, Orators, Grammarians, Rhetoricians, Lawyers, Phyſitians, and Philoſophers, forſook their former Sentiments, and adhered to the Doctrine of Chriſt.

Tam magnis Ingeniis pæditi Oratores, Grammatici, Rhetores Conſulti Juris ac Medici, Philoſophiæ etiam ſecreta rimantes Magiſteria hæc expetunt, ſpretis quibus paulò antè fidebant, &c. Arnob. cont. Gent. l. 2. p. 44.

Nay, *ſo mightily prevailed the Word of God*, in deſpight of the Devil and all the Powers of Darkneſs, that within an Age or

or two after the Incarnation of the Son of God, his dominion was as large as the World, and extended over the Territories of the whole Earth. *Heſterni ſumus, & veſtra omnia implevimus, &c.* ſaith *Tertullian.* For the Temple of *Jeruſalem* was utterly deſtroyed, and the *daily Sacrifice* perfectly *ceaſed:* and ſuch the Reformation in the Gentile World, that the Devils forſook their ancient Habitations, and trembled, whereever the noiſe of the Goſpel ſounded; their clamorous Oracles ſoon became dumb, and their principal Deities mute as a Child; their great Gods forſook their beloved Temples; and though ſome were chained, yet they were conſtrained to run away. Apol. c. 36. c. 1. Euſ. Ecc. Hiſt. *l.* 2. *c.* 3. l. 3. c. 8.

Nay, ſo bold and confident were the Primitive Chriſtians in their Apologies before their Perſecutors, that they challenged the Governours and Rulers, before whom they appeared, to bring any perſons poſſeſſed with evil Spirits, or grieved with any other Infirmities, and if they did not in the Name of Chriſt reſtore the one ſound to his health, & the other to an entire mind, they would be content to die the moſt ignominious accurſed death. Nay, to diſcover the excellency and vertue of the Chriſtian Religion, they were bold to ſay, that by the Adminiſtration of the Goſpel they would undertake to convince the moſt obſtinate, to convert the moſt obdurate ſinner, and to transform the moſt diabolical and helliſh nature into a divine and heavenly temper; verifying hereby thoſe lofty Expreſſions of the Apoſtle, that *the Word of God is quick and powerful, and ſharper than any two-edged ſword,* Heb. 4. 12. *Mighty through God, to the pulling down of ſtrong holds, caſting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itſelf againſt the knowledge of God,* 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. Tert. Apol. c. 23, 22. Lact. de falſ. Sap. l. 2. c. 25, 26

And to this very day the Son of God hath rode in triumph over the Devil, not onely by *teaching men to deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in*

this present world; but by *redeeming them* actually *from all iniquity, and purifying to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.* Thus it was prophesied of the *Messiah*, Isai. 61. 1. and fulfilled by him when he appeared in the World, as he himself testifies: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath appointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bound, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord*, Luke 4. 18, 19. In a word, the glorious company of the Apostles, the goodly fellowship of the Prophets, the noble Army of Martyrs, and all the Saints of God that have departed this life in his Faith and Fear, and now make up that part of the Church Triumphant in the Kingdom of Heaven, waiting for the accomplishment of our Victory, and the perfecting of the Body of Christ, have been redeemed by the Bloud of the Son of God, delivered by him from the snares of Death and the power of the Devil, and are now sate down with the Lamb of God in the highest Heavens.

III. The Son of God will most certainly obtain a perfect Victory over the Devil, before he resigne up his Commission to his Father; as from all eternity he was foreordained, and in the fulness of time solemnly inaugurated into this Office. As to this very day he hath been faithful in the administration of it to the destruction of Satan's Kingdom; so he will undoubtedly continue till he hath accomplished the number of his Elect, compleated the body of the Church Triumphant, and subdued the Power and Authority of his Enemies. So that though the Devil disturb the Peace of the Church, and make his rendezvouz in the World, *seeking whom he might devour* and destroy; yet the Son of God, who in his Resurrection *led captivity captive*, and to this day hath *gone on conquering and to conquer*, will still proceed in this victorious manner, till he hath perfectly routed the Devil and his

1 Cor. 15. 28.

his Angels, and his place be found no more on the Earth, as it is propheſied by St. *John*, *Rev.* 12. For at the laſt and dreadful day, there ſhall be a general conflagration in the World, to conſume the Wickedneſs thereof; when the Devil and his Angels ſhall be conſtrained to appear before this glorious Prince, and receive their final doom which was denounced upon them when they were caſt out of Heaven, to be thruſt into the bottomleſs Pit with all their accurſed Crew, to be *tormented day and night*, and to *dwell in everlaſting burnings*; when the great Redeemer of the World, the Captain of mans Salvation, ſhall glorioufly aſcend to the Kingdom of his Father, and in triumphant Chariots carry up with him an innumerable company of bleſſed Saints, who ſhall ſit down with him in his Fathers Kingdom, and reign as Kings and Queens for evermore.

We have hitherto conſidered the truth of the Propoſition delivered in the Text, That it was the grand deſigne and purpoſe of the Son of God to deſtroy the works of the Devil; that he was manifeſt in the World to deliver Man from his Power and Dominion; to teach and enable them to walk in the ways of Vertue and Goodneſs. From which Argument, 'tis juſt and obvious to infer three things.

1. From hence men may learn whether they be indeed the Servants of God, and Diſciples of Chriſt; or the Slaves and Vaſſals of the Devil. 'Tis the continual Employment of that accurſed Spirit, to lay Snares in our way to Heaven, to tempt and entice Souls to the practice of ſin, and thereby to aſcertain their eternal Ruine: On the other ſide, 'tis the conſtant endeavour of our bleſſed Saviour, to deliver men from their evil ways, to encline their hearts to the Love, and their lives to the Practice of all manner of Goodneſs; thereby to reconcile them unto God, and to ſave them in the day of the Lord. Flatter not your ſelves then in a buſineſs of ſo great concernment. Our Apoſtle lays down a plain Rule from this Doctrine: *He that doth righteouſneſs, is righteous, e-*

ven as Chriſt *is righteous*, v. 7. *He that committeth ſin, is of the Devil*, v. 8. *Whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit ſin*, v. 9. And, *in this the children of God are manifeſt, and the children of the Devil; whoſoever doth not righteouſneſs, is not of God*, v. 10. Let men pretend what they will, a ſinful and wicked life is a plain Mark and Character of one that belongs to the Devil: as on the contrary, a vertuous and godly Converſation is the onely ſigne of a Child of Grace, the onely certain evidence of a good Chriſtian.

That man who in the general courſe of his life carries a ſincere reſpect to the Commandments of God, and in good earneſt ſtudies to conform his actions to his holy Laws; that carefully avoids the occaſions of evil, and ſeriouſly reſiſts the Wiles and Temptations of the Devil; that deſpiſeth not any Precept of the Goſpel, becauſe the matter of it may ſeem ſmall and inconſiderable; nor refuſeth the ſevereſt duty, becauſe of the pains and trouble it may put him to: Such a man is the honeſt upright Chriſtian, a true Diſciple and Servant to the Son of God; notwithſtanding his infirmities and frailties, which through Inadvertency, Surprize, or a violent Temptation, he may ſometimes commit; which as 'tis impoſſible for the beſt man in this imperfect State to ſecure and fortifie himſelf againſt, ſo the Mercies of God in the diſpenſation of the Goſpel, doth graciouſly pardon, and through the Merits of Chriſt, readily paſs them over.

But *he that committeth ſin, is of the Devil*: He that caſts off the fear of God from his eyes, and lives in a conſtant courſe of a wicked life; that complies with the Temptations of the Devil, but is careleſs and indifferent in the Profeſſion and Practice of Religion; that habituates himſelf to the practice of any one known ſin, or the neglect of any neceſſary Chriſtian duty; though he be not arrived to the highth of wickedneſs, but make ſome ſhew and appearance of Religion, by profeſſing the Chriſtian Faith, frequenting the publick Offices of Religion, and exerciſing the material parts

of

of ſome Vertues and Graces: yet if his Obedience be not uniform and entire according to the ſcope and tenour of the Goſpel, he is certainly in a ſtate of ſin and iniquity; and whatever his Profeſſion or Confidence be, without controverſie a Child of the Devil: for St. *James* tells us, that true Chriſtian Wiſdom muſt ſhew itſelf *without partiality, without hypocriſie*: and the ſame Apoſtle confidently aſſures us, that *whoſoever ſhall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all.* Jam. 3. 18. 2. 10.

2. This Argument is an excellent *Criterion* to judge of the truth of Doctrines, which are delivered as the Doctrines of Chriſt, *whether they be ſo or no.* Our Apoſtle gives us an admonition and direction to this purpoſe, 1 *Jo.* 4. 1, 2, 3. *Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits, whether they be of God. Every Spirit that confeſſeth that Jeſus is come in the fleſh*; that is, every Doctrine which is conſonant with the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the deſign of his being manifeſt in the world, *is of God*; for *God manifeſted in the fleſh, is a great Myſtery of Godlineſs*, 1 Tim. 3. 15. and St. *Paul* calls the Chriſtian Faith, *the truth which is after Godlineſs*, Tit. 1. 1.

But *every Spirit that confeſſeth not that Jeſus is come in the fleſh*; that is, every Doctrine which is contrary to the deſign of his Incarnation, that is apt to hinder a good life, or invalidate the neceſſity of it, cannot be from God. Whatever Doctrine gives licence or connivance to ſin, muſt needs proceed from the Devil, that enemy of all goodneſs, though the Author pretend to an Infallible Spirit, like the Church of *Rome*; or to Divine Inſpiration, like our Modern Enthuſiaſts.

Yet in the Church of *Rome* ſuch Doctrines as theſe are ſolemnly conſtituted, as Eſſential parts of the Chriſtian Religion, and impoſed upon the Chriſtian world, with the ſame authority, as the moſt Fundamental Articles of the Chriſtian Faith: Thus the Sacrament of Penance, joyned with

with Confeſſion, is repreſented as ſufficient to Salvation; The Doctrine of Purgatory, which ſuppoſeth an expiation of ſin (by the Prayers of the living) after death: Prayers in an unknown Tongue: The prohibition of the Scriptures without licence to the people: The diſpenſing of Indulgences; the Popes Supremacy and Infallibility; and others of the ſame nature, are impoſed with the ſame Authority, and received with the ſame Veneration and Piety, as the belief of a Deity, the Redemption of the world by the Son of God, and the Rewards of another Life. It's needleſs, and would be too tedious, to conſider them particularly; but what man of common ſenſe and underſtanding, is not able to ſee, that theſe Doctrines are directly, and of their own nature, great impediments and obſtructions of a good life, and therefore are not of God?

To the ſame ill purpoſe tend thoſe frequent diſcourſes of the Abſolute Decrees of God, the irreſiſtibility of Divine Grace, together with the weak and imperfect deſcription of Faith, with the ſtrange Metaphorical expreſſions by which thoſe Doctrines are unhappily repreſented to the world; with Doctrines of like affinity confidently vented and ſpread abroad by the too curious and bold diſcoverers of hidden and unrevealed Myſteries. For that Faith that doth not ingage men to become new Creatures, and to keep the Commandments of God, can never juſtifie, much leſs ſave them; and that Grace which ſhall infallibly work to convert men, however diſpoſed, may make men careleſs and oſcitant to the duties of Religion, but doth neither require nor incourage their care and induſtry; and thoſe decrees which have irrevocably and abſolutely ſentenced men to Heaven or Hell from all Eternity, may pamper ſome with preſumption, drive others to deſpair, but can have no efficacy to perſwade men to *work out their Salvation with fear and trembling.* And therefore thoſe perſons that have imbibed theſe opinions, ought to have a great care to keep their

Hearts

Hearts ſounder than their Heads; that they may be good, though they apprehend no rational neceſſity why they ſhould be ſo. But if ſuch men be good upon falſe and pernicious Principles, (as I make no queſtion but many ſuch erroneous perſons are) what eminent Lights might they be in the Church of God, for ſanctity and holineſs of life, if they would ſuffer right Reaſon, and the acknowledged Principles of Religion to ſupplant their Erroneous Opinions, and be perſwaded to embrace *the truth as it is in Jeſus!*

Laſtly, the conſideration of this Doctrine ſhould be a prevalent and moſt effectual Argument to perſwade thoſe that believe the truth and purport of it, to leave off their ſins, and to lead Religious and godly lives. We acknowledge our ſelves Chriſtians, and thereby profeſs to believe the Doctrine of Chriſt, to live in obedience to his commands, and in the ſtricter imitation of his holy life: let us then *look unto Jeſus, the Captain of our Salvation*, that we may proſecute that great and glorious end, for which he came into the world, became *Emmanuel*, God with, and incarnate among us. That he was *manifeſt in the fleſh to deſtroy the works of the devil*, hath been in ſome meaſure repreſented to your conſideration, both from his holy life, and meritorious death, the deſign and tendency of his Doctrine, the miſſion and diſpenſation of the Holy Ghoſt, the many ſignal and eminent victories over the Devil throughout the world, in reſcuing many Souls from the tyranny of the Devil, and the powers of darkneſs, and giving them *power to become the Sons of God.* You therefore that call your ſelves by that worthy name of *Chriſtians*, *conſider the high Prieſt of your profeſſion*, and the great obligation that lies upon you to *walk worthy of your calling, and to live as becomes the Goſpel*, by renouncing the Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the ſinful luſts of the fleſh; that as you profeſs to believe the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, ye may keep Gods holy will and Commandments all the days of your life: That *having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt*, ye may be *partakers of the Divine Nature*; and as the Apoſtle exhorts, *give all diligence to add to your faith vertue, and to vertue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godlineſs, and to godlineſs brotherly kindneſs, and to brotherly kindneſs charity*, and that *theſe things may be in you and abound:* 2 Pet. 1. 4. &c.

This

This our Baptiſmal Covenant obligeth us to; this the Sacrament of the Lords Supper would enable us to effect; this the principles of our Chriſtian profeſſion require; this the precepts of our moſt holy Religion commands; for this the bleſſed promiſe of Gods Grace is tendered to Mankind in the diſpenſation of the Goſpel; this the bleſſed hope of Eternal Glory ſhould incourage us to, and the dreadful apprehenſion of everlaſting damnation ſhould make us afraid to neglect.

And if hitherto we have been ſo deſperately mad, to continue in ſlavery and ſubjection to the Devil, and thereby to ſtand at open defiance, and direct hoſtility with the Son of God: Let us not perſiſt a moment longer in ſo wretched, ſo miſerable a condition; but immediately break off our League with Satan, and become the ſervants and worſhippers of *the only true God, and of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, whom he hath ſent.* For though our caſe be very bad, whilſt inſlaved to the Tyranny of the Devil; yet ſince we enjoy the Goſpel, that word of Everlaſting life; no man ought to conclude, that his condition is deſperate. *For now is the accepted time, now is the day of Salvation,* 2 Cor. 6. 2. *This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to ſave the chiefeſt of ſinners,* 1 Tim. 1. 15. So that the Son of God is willing to *ſave us from our ſins,* and the malice of the Devil too, if we be willing to *leave off our ſins,* and to *ſerve him in holineſs and righteouſneſs:* we may yet be *turned from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God,* and ſo be reſcued from the ſlavery of the Devil and our luſts, *into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God.*

But at this time eſpecially, in which we are to Commemorate the Incarnation of the Son of God, who came to viſit us in great humility, and in infinite mercy to deliver us from the power of the Devil, we ſhould ſeriouſly reſolve to baniſh ſin from our hearts and lives, that the Son of God may take poſſeſſion of our Souls; and *dwelling in our Spirits by Faith,* we may bring forth the fruits of Piety and Charity, and all other Chriſtian Vertues and Graces, to the praiſe and honour of his bleſſed Name; that in the laſt day, when he ſhall come again in his glorious Majeſty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may riſe to the life immortal, through him who liveth and raigneth, with the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt, now and for ever. *Amen. Amen.*

FINIS.